



Watercolor Botanicals

By Andrea Pasquel

PIGMENTS - WATERCOLORS

There are numerous watercolor paint brands on the market, for better results try using the best quality ones.

Watercolor paints are made of pigment + gum arabic, the amount of water and pigment vary depending of the variety of watercolor you're using.

- **TUBE** Contains more water and gum arabic, ideal for large surfaces.
- **PANS** The pigment is more concentrated, it's better for dry painting, the biggest advantage of sets is having all the colors on hand without having to take the lids off tubes. The colors mixed in paint sets match so that they're more compatible when mixed.
- **WATER SOLUBLE COLOR** Watercolor pencils can be very useful for intensifying some small areas, the brand that I use is Faber Castell.



The best and most popular brand is the British brand **Winsor and Newton, COTMAN quality.**

It's worth investing, but most of all you need to practice, great materials on their own don't guarantee the quality of a piece.

- **RED** - Permanent Alizarin, Scarlet lake
- **BLUE** - Prussian, Cerulean, Ultramarine
- **YELLOW** - Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow
- Others I recommend adding to your collection are: Payne's Gray and Magenta

You can discard the color white from your options. It would be best to use a tube of white gouache, gel pen, Prismacolor wax pencils and white acrylic paint. Any of these materials will work to create highlights.

PAPER

Paper can have different finishes, smooth or rough.

The one that's used most for botanical painting is **HOT PRESSED** paper (HP) because it has a totally smooth and soft surface which gives you the ability to be more precise with details.

Some artists prefer **using COLD PRESSED** (CP) because it allows for more layers of water and the paint sticks better, even though the surface is rough.

The recommended weight is 300 grams (140 lbs.). The higher the weight, the more water and manipulation it'll be able to tolerate. For the size of the piece we're working on, it's best to use a block, because the paper is already prepared and ready to be used, unlike when you buy paper by the sheet. This type of paper needs to be prepared before painting.

Paper brands vary from country to country, these are some that I recommend looking for or ordering online:

- Strathmore watercolor 300 CP series
- Canson XL CP
- Arches Satine HP block (pink cover)
- Canson Moulin du Roy pad HP

It's really important to choose acid-free paper, mass produced paper has more acid to whiten the paper which ends up ruining it after a while and our painting will also be affected



PAINTBRUSHES

You can start with 3 sizes of brushes, the most versatile ones have a round tip, the hair material depends a lot on your budget. A good brush should be soft and malleable, the handle shouldn't be too long. The best ones are made with natural hair, but when you're starting out a synthetic one will do the trick.

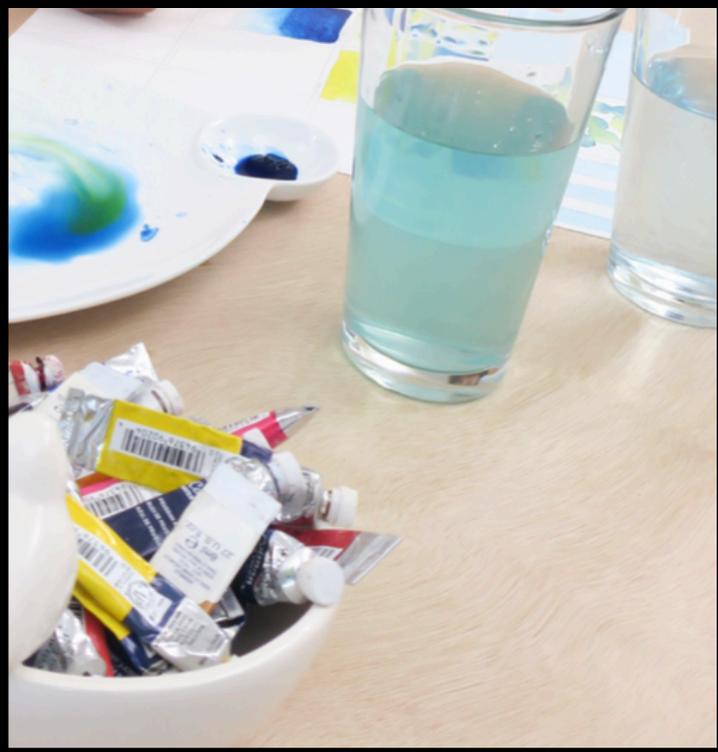
WATER CONTAINERS

Choose 2 glass jars or metal containers, the bigger the better since this will keep you from having to change the water constantly.

- **Container 1:** You'll use this one to clean the brush every time you change colors
- **Container 2:** You'll keep this one full of clean water for the wash base to keep the water clean so it doesn't ruin your illustration

PALETTES

The space I use to mix colors, it's a ceramic plate. You can also use the inside of your watercolor set cover, or a plastic palette. When you need to paint a very extensive area of paper, I recommend having the color dissolved in water ready to use in a cup, glass or glass or ceramic container.



PENCILS

H, 2H, HB, 2B, 4B are the pencils that I use to draw, shade, sketch, do a color study and take notes.

I specifically use the H pencil to trace the final drawing on the watercolor paper

SCISSORS, BOX CUTTER, X-ACTO KNIFE

You'll need some scissors, a box cutter or an X-Acto knife to make basic cuts in the plant that you'll be working with.

ERASER, BLENDING STUMPS

A soft gum eraser or a kneaded eraser will help you to correct mistakes. We'll need blending stumps, a thin one and a thick one, these will help you to create shadows better, add volume and practice the grisaille exercise.



MASKING LIQUID

This is a latex based solution that's very useful to apply and block detail areas where we don't want color, or that we need to keep it white. To apply this solution, you need to use one brush exclusively for this purpose. There are lots of masking liquid brands, the one I use most is the brand ATL

PAPER TOWELS, TOWELS

When I paint, I always have a towel next to my palette where I constantly dry and clean my brush. A disposable paper towel would also do the trick.

WHITE PAPER

You'll need sheets of bond paper and vellum for sketching.